

## POLITICAL SYSTEMS

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### DEMOCRACY WITHOUT *DEMOS*?\*\*

#### ABSTRACT

The article presents an analysis of the role of *demos* in power relations in democratic states. The author of the text postulates the need for contemporary political science research to expand its analyses beyond formal structures of political institutions and include in its scope also features of *demos* – the “cultural factor” to better understand the functioning and chances for success of democracy in different states.

*Keywords:* democracy, political science research, axiology, *demos*

When in 1999 in Kraków I organised for the International Political Science Association (IPSA) a round table discussion, the question that I dared ask the participants and which, as was my intention, was meant to be the main topic of the discussion, was the following: “is the model

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of the Western, liberal-capitalist democracy, replicable on a global scale?” (See Pałecky, 1999, p. 11)

This question was justified for at least two reasons. First of all, at that time the international political science community was engaged in a debate on the transitions towards democracy by the countries of the then dismantling “Soviet Bloc”<sup>1</sup>. Clearly, at that time there was still no knowledge as what kind of democracies would emerge once the system transition is completed (cf. Brzeziński, 1990, p. 259 et seq.). Secondly, at that time the “globalization discourse”, whose participants were racing with each other in making the prognoses of the consequences of the fast progressing standardization of areas such as culture but also political systems, was in full swing; Zygmunt Bauman for example wrote: “Globalization is on everyone’s lips” (Bauman, 1998, p. 5). And yet, as it turned out, my question did not get the participants’ attention. Instead, the discussions focused on the collapse of communism and the “globalization processes” (See also Lowy, 1999, p. 88 et seq.). that were, naturally, clearly linked to it. However, today, when I reflect on why this was the case and why during the subsequent IPSA World Congresses this topic did not return, I come to an unavoidable and very important, from the perspective of this paper, conclusion that the causes for that state of affairs were not scientific but rather situational.

However, had research been undertaken at that time, it would have been diagnosed that at least some of the societies which were then freeing themselves from the communist system could face some “internal” difficulties while introducing and consolidating capitalist liberal democracy. Out of necessity, an undesired gradation of their capacities in this regard would have been developed, which would not be in juxtaposition with the policy of support expressed by Western European countries and the United States in regards to the system transformation that was then taking place in Central and Eastern Europe and which could weaken the undisputable and

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Fukujama was then announcing the global triumph of liberal democracy calling it the “end of history” (see Fukujama 1996; also Heywood, 2009, p. 218; Brzeziński, 1990, p. 263 et seq.; in newer literature Wróbel, 2002, p. 17 et seq.).

much needed enthusiasm of these societies during the ground-breaking period of the “peaceful revolutions”.

Social problems do not disappear solely because such is the will of the politicians, nor because they are absent in the “politically correct” research. Thus, I was not particularly surprised when in the January 2014 issue of the *Journal of Democracy* the problem that I wanted to discuss in the late 1990<sup>s</sup> returned like a boomerang. This time the discussion, titled “Reconsidering the Transition Paradigm”, was led by Marc F. Plattner and participated by such thinkers as; Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Donald L. Horowitz and Thomas Carothers. It would be difficult to find a more competent group of experts indeed. An adequate summary of this discussion is expressed in the conclusion formulated by Horowitz who stated that the concept of the transition paradigm is still of a certain utility even though, as the scholar also pointed out, some caution needs to be applied since there are differences between countries. For this reason, in his view, adhering to universal patterns of democracy by all may be of little use. Horowitz also warned the international actors (that is influential participants of international relations – noted by K.P.) against using standardized practices which apparently were to help in the transition processes in different parts of the world. Fukuyama also expressed his concern as whether the process of consolidating democracy could ever take place, considering the now observable phenomenon which he referred to as “rolling back” of the principles of liberal democracy in many countries which not that long ago underwent the process of system transformation<sup>2</sup>.

A more general conclusion that can be drawn from this discussion and which more directly refers to the question formulated in the introduction to this text, can be formulated in the following way: the political axiology and the **doctrine of capitalist liberal democracy**, the so-called Western democracy, both aspiring to become universal, **have become, in today’s international order, even more unrealistic** – if not completely utopian – **than that was the case in the 1990<sup>s</sup>**. It, thus, becomes quite clear that together with this generalised axiology and a rather foggy doctrine

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<sup>2</sup> For the summary of this discussion see: Network of Democracy Institutes: [ndri@ned.org](mailto:ndri@ned.org).

which are losing their validity, the research on democracy has to undergo a significant change. Otherwise, it will become a futile effort of limited cognitive value. Possibly, the time has now come for a reflection over the subject of such reformed research.

Let us start with the title of this article. It contains an explicit contradiction; **democracy without demos** is not a democracy. Plain and simple. Hence, an explanation is in order. First of all, the phrase “without demos” **means in this case “without demos” in the mainstream political science research** which aspires to formulate theories (explanatory generalizations). In other words, research activities that focus on voting preferences or social attitudes in regards to a certain ideology or political program are not focused on demos. By stating this I do not intend, by any means, to underestimate the practical value of these kinds of research activities. Secondly, the phrase “**without demos**” as used in this title **also means without such *demos* that would meet, at a satisfactory level, its normatively determined characteristics** – what it should be like, what we wish it would be like in Poland and worldwide, as a guarantee of the continuation of our democratization process.

The term “**democracy**” should also be explained. For the author of this article “democracy” is a “**continuously ongoing process**”. It refers to something that is in the “making” and not something that has been formed once and forever, a standard phenomenon; it is a “process of democratization” with a target that is completely unachievable (*avec tout conditions fixe*) as it is solely desirable, being an ideal construction in a specific ideology. It is the principal value – a goal, which does not require justification. “Democracy” and “democratization process” (for short: “democratization”) are the terms that are used in this text interchangeably.

Such a statement also requires further explanation. First of all, the already mentioned political axiology and the doctrine both refer to a political system that is based on five principles, which assumedly are to allow the implementation of the principal value – complete democracy. These principles include: competitive free-market economy, political liberalism, “rule of law” (which means that, among other things, there are guarantees of an equal treatment by law as well as observance of civil rights and liberties and universal human rights), lack of discrimination in elections

of political representatives, decision-makers elected by popular vote with term limits and guaranteed sovereignty of their political decisions. An exhaustive explanation of these quite obvious principles clearly expands the subject matter of this article as well as the competence of its readers. Let us then trust this competence and move on to the next issue.

“Capitalist, liberal democracy” (“Western democracy”), which is based on the above mentioned principles, also constitutes, until today, the above-mentioned “principal value”, one whose reaching and protection do not require – as it has been noted already – justification. It is a value “in itself” for all those who accept democracy as the best possible political system when it comes to meeting the needs of all contemporary societies organized in state structures (cf. i.e. Held, 1987, part II and III; Sartori, 1994, especially p. 525 et seq.).

The term “transition” that has also been mentioned in the introduction to this text refers to a characteristic way of implementation of system transformation that is aimed at the implementation of a democratic system. It is a process of a relatively peaceful nature and rather consensual, although – what should also be pointed out – it is ideologically quite radical and assumes a gradual “consolidation of democracy”, meaning the ordered preservation of the democratic system as well as the optimization of application of its above mentioned principles.

Next, the phrase “today’s reality” is used to refer to a contemporary international (inter-state) situation which, when compared with the “optimistic” 1990s, has undergone numerous, and significant as well as multi-aspect changes, which again need not be explained in great detail here. Should anyone, however, want to make a reference to adequate literature, the source that is worth recommending in this regard is “Liquid Modernity” by Zygmunt Bauman (2006). This work is key to understanding social and global processes that have created ground for the “political order” of the new 21<sup>st</sup> century to emerge. The order that, more than anything else, is seen by many as submerged in a constant, as if immune to any cure, crisis of democracy (cf. Krastev, 2013). What should also be noted is the fact that as opposed to the rather successful “transitions” in the Central and Eastern European states of the former Soviet Bloc that took place in the 1990s, the later attempts at democratization undertaken in countries

such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and a few African countries, especially those where the “Islamic revolution” took place, and in some countries of the Far East, but also continental China, experienced and still continues to experience a certain degree of failure. This fact makes the thesis that democracy cannot be, and will not be, a global system highly probable. It is not the goal of the rather, out of necessity, short cut reflections presented in this article to seek and analyse the causes for such a state of affairs. Instead, and in relation to the leading problem of the “lack of *demos*”, two hypotheses could be formulated and followed by adequate reflections. The main hypothesis suggests that the observed **failures of the democratisation process are a consequence** – at least in an equal if not decisive degree – **of the lack of adequate competence on the part of *demos*** in the relations of political power of a given state, **and not only** – as a great share of political research suggests – of the **mistakes and institutional deformations**, meaning the ways of organizing and implementing the political system. Thus, the first and the main cause of all “weaknesses of democracy” lies each time in the specific characteristics of a given “cultural factor”, which here is limited to the state of the **political awareness and popular political attitudes** of a given **society** which is organized in a state structure. Put it simply, this awareness and attitudes are the established “common” convictions and dispositions of people who are “involved”, actively or passively, in political processes (which are syndromic with economic and social phenomena) taking place in their state and its international surroundings. These deeply internationalized, commonly accepted and taken for granted, meaning unquestioned, values as well as the state of knowledge about life that characterise this society, cause difficulties, or even make it impossible, for *demos* to fulfil its obligations in the relations of political power.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, social awareness, when it is adequately shaped and internalized in a relatively stable way, can change the category of “those who are governed” into *demos* and make it one of the most important allies of democratization. This hypothesis should be supplemented by

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<sup>3</sup> The “cultural factor” is hence a collection of factors intentionally limited here to the so-called “non-material culture” (for more on material and non-material culture see i.e. Kroeber, 2009, p. 282 et seq.).

another, more general, hypothesis, namely: **political power institutions of a state, even when elected in the most democratic way** – which in the previous stages of transition took place very rarely – **and even when functioning in accordance with the democratic rules of government, never have their own, autonomic and initiating impact potential that is sufficient for generating independent, common and stable democratic social relations.** What is more, when they are alienated from their social context, meaning they are deprived of *demos*, these institutions are quick and easy to succumb to an autocratic deviation. That is why all attempts at democratization which aim at introducing instant political institutions from abroad are doomed to a quick and unconditional failure.

If we try to increase – to some degree – the probability the above presented hypotheses, it is worth pointing a certain striking cognitive weakness in the democracy research which makes it difficult (if not impossible?) to better recognize the reasons as to why the dream of the many political leaders to spread capitalist and liberal democracy worldwide has no chances of coming true.

This weakness refers to a surprising **one-sidedness of political science research** in regards to democracy. The lack of adequacy of this research in regards to a range of phenomena that are clearly one of its subject matters and the shortage of expected explanatory as well as pragmatic outcomes which it would deliver become most obvious when we agree with quite a commonplace statement that democracy is a way wielding political power which is based on the principle of a **two-sided, normative and substantial dependency of both parties of power relations:** power institutions, meaning “**those who govern**” and citizens, meaning “**those who are governed**”. Giovanni Sartori explains this phenomenon in the following way: “In the final calculation politics is dependent on the relations between those who govern and those who are governed. It was believed, however, that this dichotomy existed in all political systems with the exception of democracy, but the fact that the democratic decision-making process blurs the line dividing those who govern from those who are governed does not mean that there is no such line” (Sartori, 1994, p. 115, also p. 46 *passim*). Let us add to these observations that the essence of this dependence between “those who govern” and “those who are governed”

in a democratic system, or in other words; between institutions of political power and *demos*, lies in the **rule of their democratic co-operation**, which when breached inevitably changes democracy into some sort of an autocratic regime (despotism, dictatorship, absolutism, but also, for example, ochlocracy). “Those who are governed” in a democratic state cannot be, therefore, treated as subjects who are deprived of their rights. They should be seen as partners of those who govern to a degree that is relevant in the making of, the content of, and the way of implementing the political decisions. What is more, they should be partners who form the category of “those who govern” into adequate institutions (system) and legitimize their power entitlements. Hence, **democracy cannot be reduced solely to institutional forms**, such as a parliament elected by a popular vote, or a responsible government, or a law-abiding public administration and law enforcement, or an independent judiciary, etc. Democracy requires the existence of a true **democratic society**, a society that is able to perform in power relations the role of a real (not only formal) partner. The most noble, even respecting the popularly accepted norms and values and effectively governing, rulers do not make the power relation a democratic one until they do not turn those “who are governed” into their partners as it is them without whom “those who govern” cannot implement their “power” in a “democratic” way.

As simple and trivial it could sound the so-called “good government” is not a necessary marker of democracy. It gets that chance only when it co-governs with *demos*. Nothing works better for the effectiveness of the decision made by the political ruler than good partnership relations with those to whom these decisions are addressed. Breaching the partnership rule inevitably sets off the spiral of coercion and leads to the “democracy deficit” or even complete departure from democratic forms of governance.

The most explicit example proving the adequacy of these observations are the problems with democratization within the European Union. Here we have, on the one side of the power relations, a built out, centralised and equipped with vast competence bureaucracy of “delegated power” that comes from the member states and, on the other side, an embryonic form of *demos*, meaning the European citizenship, which is limited



to a few rights provided by the European Council to those who enjoy the national citizenship of the EU member states. These rights include: freedom of movement and residence within the European Union, participation in elections to European Parliament, auxiliary consular protection and possibility to file petitions with EU institutions, including the Ombudsman. Other things, however, such as employment or investing, are subject to many limitations stipulated in individual “state laws”. This artificially constructed *demos*, with its limited rights, which additionally are of secondary importance when it comes to the shaping of relations with the EU authorities (institutions) and that has not (which is also very important) been assigned any political obligations that would be shared by all “European citizens”, and which is principally incapable of directly legitimizing power of the majority of EU institutions, is – *de facto* and *de iure* – deprived of the possibility of a real implementation of partnership functions in regards to the ruling “Brussels autocrats”. Consequently, the EU, with all of its unquestionable merits, cannot brag that it has achieved the status of a democratic political entity (cf. Bodnar, 2004, p. 126; Brostl, 2004, p. 19 *passim*, Halmai, 2004, p. 47 *passim*).

Should this, as a matter of fact, little revealing truth on the partnership role that *demos* plays in a democratic system as well as its performance be confronted with contemporary mainstream political science research, we would notice that the research efforts have been headed in the opposite direction, namely at examining the formal structures of institutions of political power. It is the quality of these institutions – and the quality that is very differently understood – that today’s political scientists primarily regard as the main reason for the strength or weakness of contemporary democracies. Consequently, hoping that their findings are useful for practice researchers have become focused on exposing newer, apparently also more perfect, institutional forms, suggesting adequate system “reforms” for them (cf. Antoszewski, 2014, p. 381 *passim*). However, when we start examining “those who govern” and their practices of wielding political power we notice, which well justifies the above presented research tendency, that excessive formalization of power relations, which is also an “escape” into an increasing number of legal regulations and more complex procedures, effectively blurs in the eyes of “those who are governed” the real goals of

“those who govern”<sup>4</sup>. I am far away from questioning the role of political institutions in democratization processes and refusing the proceduralization efforts of their pragmatic justification. However, it needs to be pointed out that ignoring, in this way, the citizens’ partnership in the governance process, possibly even without awareness of its tragic consequences, ruins the foundation of democracy. What is even worse, “those who govern”, who benefit from this “ruining” by getting for themselves some executive facilitations, which are wrongly linked with an increase of their normative competence (potential power), find (without much difficulty) a comfortable intellectual (“scientific”, “theoretical”, “expert”) support in this “purely” institutional political science research. Even a glance at the topics of the programs of the last IPSA World Congresses convinces me that there is a clear qualitative lack of proportions in the focus of contemporary political science on the problem of the functioning of the state institutions of political power<sup>5</sup>. Research into the characteristics of *demos* can be found on the margins of the explanations of negative phenomena which take place in political parties, and in recent years, with an increasingly shrinking participation in elections that has been noted for the majority of democratic countries in Europe as well as the US. In regards to the latter there are only a few more attempts to find an empirical answer to the question about the reasons for such a state of affairs; see for example research on presidential elections in the USA (Ching-Hsing Wang, 2013, p. 483 et seq.; Stockmer, LaMontagne, Scruggs, 2013, p. 74 et seq.). At the same time a different question, incomparably more important, that is the question about the chances of introducing a democratic system – at least in the form that is compatible with the requirements of capitalist liberal (“Western”) democracy – in countries of a strategic meaning for the fate of the international community – is left unsaid. Even if we gave up on the idea of a universal applicability of the Western democracy model, which seems *prima facie* justified (views are in this regard divided: Habermas, 2014, p. 45, 91, et seq.), the above formulated question does not lose

<sup>4</sup> More about this for example in the practices of making and applying law see Pałeczki, 2013, p. 56 et seq.

<sup>5</sup> See *International Political Science Abstracts*. Paris IPSA, AISP, 2000–2012.

“automatically” its justification. The only thing that finding to it a well-documented and justified answer requires “switching” the research focus and theoretical reflections from political institutions to their inseparable partner in a democratic system, that is *demos*. This is the direction of the reflections by Leszek Kołakowski (2014, p. 201 et seq.).

Establishing any kind of methodological requirements for the kind of research that is being postulated here requires a more careful look at the concept of *demos* itself. This term is usually associated with the category of “citizens” (meaning people who have “citizenship” of a given country). And indeed, while it is a feature that should not be too hastily and in each case given up on, under certain conditions, which if not met, “citizenship” in itself is an indicator of a small distinction and quite weak “explanatory power” for explaining the processes of democratization.

More than anything else *demos* cannot be associated with persons who hold citizenship which, in turn, is understood as an effect of a formal law-making activity (meeting the administrative procedures of receiving citizenship – which is described as “**formal citizenship**”). Certainly, such a procedure and its fulfilment are necessary conditions for citizenship, but from the here accepted point of view, they are quite insufficient. Let us then put aside a certain tradition that is held by the theoreticians of democracy and that simplifies the reality. Its followers like Giovanni Sartori, believe that *demos* simply means all citizens (in a formal sense) who are assigned electoral rights and who implement them by taking part in electing political representatives (Sartori, 1994, p. 115). In my view, belonging to *demos* requires something more. This requirement is a **real socio-political agency** of all addressees of political decisions, including of course also those who hold formal citizenship. Without this agency democracy inevitably becomes a label that is put on some form of an autocratic regime. This real agency (“**material citizenship**”) is an ability to a substantial, independently determined by the individual, participation in a broadly understood political process; a participation that is guaranteed not only by law, but also by the creation of adequate material and organizational conditions for all potential participants of the political process and their using of these opportunities, from which the normatively allowed free-will abstinence significantly impedes or disables implementing political power (execut-

ing real power) by state institutions equipped with competence for such performance (Pałeck, 2003, p. 215). Material citizenship should then be understood as an element of the already obtained formal citizenship and additionally such a state of awareness and attitudes as well as behaviour of the beneficiaries of this citizenship which point to their culturally shaped will and the need to participate in the political process (participation in their politically organized community; the state and its components, in "civil society" organizations), This is a necessary condition, but it is also not sufficient to set off the process of partnership participation in political power, meaning the democratization process.

Material citizenship is, of course, a gradual qualification. From this perspective, we can – in a simplified way – **understand democratization** as obtaining by "formal" citizens an increasing degree of the qualities of "material citizens". From a historical point of view (in the realm of the European culture) it should be seen as **the ongoing emergent process of the transformation of "subjects" into citizens** (formal) and later the latter **into participants of the political process with dynamically increasing qualities of "material citizenship"**.

The term "political process" should be then understood as the overall activities undertaken by both sides of political power relations ("those who govern" and "those who are governed" that is *demos*) for the implementation of the normatively established values-goals, meaning the subject matter of this relationship (in an ideal model of democracy, these are the activities undertaken for the implementation of a program that has been agreed on as a result of the partnership).

"Material citizenship" is in this approach not only a legal or formal qualification, but also a formal-substantial one. Or more precisely: it is legal-factual qualification as it includes the rights and the obligations which are not only established by law but also by other normative systems accepted by the society (of course to a degree in which they are relevant in regards to the relations of political power) but also because, which was mentioned before, it requires the meeting of the substantial ("material") conditions for using these rights and applying some psycho-behavioural dispositions (I shall return to this topic a bit later). Let us also add that the above presented is an **individualistic concept of citizenship** (meaning one

that refutes a holistic concept of *demos*), which sees it as a political feature of individuals, individual people in a state, and not a qualification of their whole analytically constructed categories (aggregates) (Habermas, 2014., s. 80; see also Chodubski, 2014, p. 41 et seq.). The state itself should be seen as a politically organized society (not necessarily ethnically homogenous, meaning not always a “nation-state”) and not only as territorially and hierarchically organized institutions of political power (Pałeczki, 2007, p. 15). The personal nature of material citizenship does not contradict with the way it is used in an intermediary way: by membership in different civil society associations, something that is of crucial importance today. Clearly, the times when all citizens could have been gathered at one place at the same time to make a political decision (meaning creating, protection and especially distributing public goods) have probably passed with no chances for return. Today the question we are asking is whether the virtual communication technologies can soon become a substitute for the ancient Greek agora and whether they will enable a direct communication (making political decisions) by a practically unlimited number of internet users – citizens? As of today we do not have an answer to this question.

Being a member of *demos* (in the degree determined by the quality of the material citizenship or, which is the same thing, by the level of the real political agency) is inextricably related with the feeling of some characteristic emotions and sharing of some knowledge which symptomatically generate **common views**<sup>6</sup>. The latter, for example, include: a sense of solidarity with other citizens, a cultural or ethnic identification, patriotism or similar understanding of the national interest, etc. As Robert Dahl rightly pointed out the emergence and stability of democratic

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<sup>6</sup> „Wspólnotowe przekonania” we współczesnych, funkcjonalistycznych teoriach socjologicznych są zazwyczaj uznawane za „imperatywy funkcjonalne”, to jest za taką właściwość systemu społecznego, która determinuje wszystkie procesy zachodzące w jego obrębie (cf. Turner, 2005, p. 38 et seq.). Współoddziaływanie stanów emotywnych i kognitywnych w przekonaniach, w świadomości, każe również w tym kontekście zauważyć konieczną „otwartość poznawczą” uczestników procesu demokratyzacji, pozwalającą na uzgodnienie ze „swoją” zastaną, „oczywistą”, „własną”, „pewną” wiedzą, wiedzy innej, pozabawionej tych przymiotów i towarzyszącą temu zdolność do ich wzajemnego uzgodnienia lub zmiany poglądów.

governments depends on people's belief systems (cf. Dahl, 1986, p.49 et seq.). A significant degree of the above-individual compliance with the belief system is also a characteristic qualifying us as a part of a given *demos*, meaning towards being a real citizen of a politically engaged society. Let us complete this statement with the reflections presented by Jürgen Habermas who pointed out that democratic citizenship does not necessarily need to be rooted in a national identity. Instead, it requires socialization of all citizens in one common political culture (Habermas, 1992, p. 23). The most desirable effect of such socialization for the process of democratization, which does not necessarily lead to the standardization of values shared by all citizens (the unification of their preferences), is an emergence of a general **ability for axiological inclusion**. This ability is necessary for *demos* to play the role of a partner in a democratic system of governance ("an inclusion in a political society" as it is called by Kenneth Baynes, while Jürgen Habermas "moves" the meeting of this condition to a possibility of participation in a "global society", to "Inklusionsanspruch") (Habermas, 2014, p. 42, 108 et seq.). This ability for axiological inclusion means introducing "new" and "foreign" values to "our own" already internalized values, to "our own" values that are included in our preference scales. This ability means including these "other" values and accommodating them with "our own" values, instead of their "automatic", spontaneous, and deprived of any reflection, rejection when they come across as incompatible with our own beliefs. Rejecting of "other" values obviously is not forbidden either. However, it should be proceeded with self-reflection accompanied by a careful balancing of both negative and positive consequences. This ability for an axiological inclusion comes across as particularly valuable in the case of the so-called public issues, that is those with wide social consequences; as it allows for solidarity in action where citizens (institutions) are driven by an egalitarian principle of "nothing for some at the cost of others".

Without axiological inclusion the emergence of community-oriented convictions is of little probability, if possible at all. If we accept the number, the degree and the extent of matters of the reached agreements in regards to power decisions, between *demos* and "those who govern", as a measurement of partnership in a given political regime, then all shortages in

the ability for the axiological inclusion will result in the departure from partnership and, as a result, the democratization process.

An emergence of a relatively common ability for axiological inclusion in a given society is, from the perspective of research on *demos*, the best possible indicator of the degree to which the above-mentioned “cultural factor” shapes in a society the characteristics that are favourable for democracy. Accepting that culture plays a decisive role in this process (which, nonetheless, should be tempered due to the achievements of the contemporary sciences on human somatic nervous system) we could, following the example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century cultural anthropologists, differentiate between different kinds of *demos*, by placing them on different points of a certain *continuum*, which at the one end would have societies with cultures excluding axiological inclusion, meaning excluding democracy (as they exclude partnership among parties to power relations as well as, which will be discussed in more details below, the principle of representation and the need for competence or civic self-limitation) and these that allow, or even promote, axiological inclusion, meaning create basic conditions for democratization. Scaling, from this perspective, of different societies would, of course, require new empirical research which would aim at establishing these “inclusive” abilities, that is qualifications for fulfilling the role of *demos*. It could then turn out, against the rules of the so-called political correctness, that cultures of some societies practically exclude an introduction of democracy to their political organization that – paraphrasing a bit the saying by Leszek Kołakowski – “democracy is against their nature” (2014, p. 169).

Taking into account these remarks, the shortest qualification of *demos* could be based on the following rule: *demos* is all people who, in a given country, have a material (legal and real) citizenship. Analytically, and not only analytically, they could be included in specific political power relations, in the category of “those who are governed”. Actually, from the methodological point of view, research in this category would have to be – in an adequately balanced degree – both speculative and empirical and it should lead towards cataloguing of the characteristics of “those who are governed” and whose presence (presence in an adequately high degree) if not guarantees, then at least is favourable to, an introduction

and maintaining of a certain form of democracy in a given country (in a global order) (cf. Godlewski, 2014, p. 364 et seq.). A democracy that is, of course, acceptable in the existing environment, meaning one that is in accordance with the basic principles of the functioning of democratic regimes (societies). Determining that such characteristics are lacking in many societies, as well as that there is a lack of presumptions indicating their emergence, would lead to a negative answer not only to the question of what are the chances for the worldwide spreading of democracy, but also about the adequate changes in national and international strategies and political practices.

Political science research, as it has been postulated in different sections of this article, clearly requires some ideal “reference platform” determined by a catalogue of characteristics of *demos* which are necessary for generating all democratic processes. Some of them have already been discussed, let us turn to others now.

Let us then start with a simple statement that all modern democracies are “doomed” for a better or worse implementation of the representative system. A political process in democratic systems, meaning all activities undertaken in complex relations between “those who govern” (institutions of political power) and “those who are governed” (citizens) take place based on the **principle of representation**, which directly limits the possibility of exercising power by the whole *demos* (exceptionally it solely allows practicing direct democracy). On a side note: we can be represented only by our partners, while the “chiefs” always represent solely themselves, they represent “their own” political programs even when they dress them, for propaganda reasons, into “unquestionable” interests and expectations of “their people”. Hence, the prerequisite for any democratic system, even though it is not sufficient, is the citizens’ ability to: a/ formulate, establish and practice the commonly accepted principle of representation, b/ a common readiness to be subordinate to executive decisions of this representation, especially those that aim at electing its composition and the implementation of the strategy of creating, protecting and distributing public goods c/ such subordination to these decisions that can pass a test during which these agreements clash with the opposing ones, articulated particular interests, different components of *demos* (ethnic, religious,



professional, “interest groups” etc.). These characteristics do not exclude the legally accepted forms of protests. They eliminate “rebellions against the rule of law”, meaning the ability to find, in case of a conflict (not only conflict of interests, but also that of convictions, ideas, programs, etc.) such a compromise that in an equal (not offering any privileges) degree would be “costly” for the whole *demos* (it would be an equal burden for all citizens), meaning also for these groups whose only “interests” and “rights” are to – following the government’s decision – be fulfilled<sup>7</sup>.

Naturally, all these “abilities” of *demos* are of a gradual nature, which suggests that the chances for democracy in some societies and in certain geopolitical, economic, civilizational, etc. conditions are subject to certain differentiation. It is also easy to notice here that they all are currently used by numerous voices criticizing the practicing of modern democracies. We do not need to make any special efforts to come to the conclusion, and one that is quite demolishing for different idealizations of democracy, that the more tolerant a society is in regards to differences in viewpoints, the more it is attached to the principle of freedom of expression, the more it is pluralistic in regards to the value system and the more favourable it is in regards to individualistic forms of fulfilling needs and an unlimited freedom of competition, which, together are seen as “virtues” of western democracy (cf. for example Dubiel, 2009, p. 447 et seq.; Zachariasz, 2009, p. 16 et seq.; and also earlier Cook, 1964, p. 177 et seq.), the more difficult it is to get and maintain all these abilities (characteristics) of *demos* that are “necessary” for democracy<sup>8</sup>. In other words, modern democracies are burdened with a difficult to overcome, if possible at all, internal contradiction between the values-goals, which they declare and which they make their “binding axiology” (“ideology”) which they try to implement and the securing of necessary political conditions for their implementation, meaning a possibly stable, effective and with the widest possible range partnership-based co-operation with *demos*. The latter requires,

<sup>7</sup> I would adhere to this view, being at the same time fully aware, that it can be, for many reasons, quite controversial. Discussion over it would require a separate analysis (see Hayek, 1973, p. 55 et seq.).

<sup>8</sup> On the problem of contemporary multiculturalism which minimizes its ability for system stabilization see Bauman, 2011, p. 25, 65 et seq.

in somewhat difficult to establish degree, an adequate uniformization of viewpoints of “those who govern” and “those who are governed” – something which always generates the fear of a possibility of a slip towards totalitarianism – uniformization which is not fully compatible with the warranties of pluralism in democracy. An apparent, and also most often used, remedy for this state of affairs is the limiting of the role of *demos* in power relations, hence also the obligations of *demos* in these relations, to participation in elections<sup>1</sup> changing the *demos* into the “electorate”. The frequency of fulfilling this obligation by *demos*, however, also shows some stable and decreasing tendencies; interestingly about it wrote Bożena Wroniszewska, Ewa Ganowicz (2013, p. 127 et seq.). This is accompanied by a certain conviction, which can be fatal for democracy in the long term and which can be reduced to a certain colloquial statement such as: “let’s elect whomever and what this elected person will later do for us will be solely this person’s problem”. In this way, we are easily approaching the caricature of democracy, a democracy without a partnership-based engagement of *demos*. The question is: in such a case are we really still talking about democracy?

Earlier, I stressed my conviction about the necessity of the ability to form partnerships for the processes of maintaining and/or introducing democracy (or similarly: common sets of beliefs, axiological inclusions and application of the representation rule). All these abilities, regardless of the specific conditions that enable their practicing, should become inviolable “equipment” of the entire, politically organized, society, a certain “democracy potential” for permanent use, both by “those who govern” and “those who are governed”, in reality constituting one *demos*, even though organizationally divided for performing different public roles. Such an assertion convinces us that it is worth pointing out to an additional, more “community-related” and – as I am convinced – equally important characteristic of *demos*, which – just like the other ones, remains poorly recognized by political science, if at all. Its importance for democracy comes from the fact that when as a characteristic of *demos* it disappears, the partnership of parties in the relationship of political power becomes superficial, we have a certain kind of a propagated “democracy of regime”. What I have in mind here is the **ability for self-limitation** in two different

editions: **competence** on behalf of “those who govern” (institutions of political power) and **civic** on behalf of “those who are governed”. While the former means that in the acts of power wielding the only competence that is applied is the one that is legally allowed and absolutely necessary for an efficient effectiveness in reaching values-goals (ideally earlier agreed on by means of a partnership with those to whom these acts refer). Simply speaking, “rulers” (an institution holding political power) “can” – without trespassing their rights – do much more by adhering to these rights which allow them to act (and even with the approval of “those who are governed”). Nonetheless, consciously and purposefully they limit themselves solely to what is commonly accepted and seen as necessary, for getting the results that are expected by *demos*, nothing more. Hence, they can, for example, pass a completely legal tax increase but they do not do it, and not because of the potential disapproval from the electorate (*demos*), but because there is a different – less painful for the tax-payers and comparably effective – solution to financial problems. “Those who govern” could also introduce regulations establishing special consumer privileges. But again, the ability to self-limit their competence, can prevent them from such a decision. A constant breaching of this rule creates such an asymmetry of agency between “those who are governed” and “those who govern” that their partnership in carrying out public affairs is no longer possible. Naturally, the partnership does not annihilate the asymmetry of agency of the parties in power relations. This would be an annihilation of power. In democracy, however, this asymmetry should be functionally minimized: to the size allowing (realistically, and not based on the principles of some ideology) the implementation of power. Democratic rulers, soliciting a partnership with *demos*, should be driven by the policy of minimalizing (“holding horses”) the range of their competence, instead of making attempts, usually doomed for failure, of “solving problems” by taking on additional competences (increasing their power entitlements).

A civic self-limitation means a deliberate limitation in claiming and using one’s civic rights, no matter what their legal or material warranties are. This means that the beneficiaries limit the usage of their rights only to those whose implementation does not pose a real threat and in a degree that is not dangerous for the receiving, protecting and increasing the

blessings of the most important public goods (goods that are particularly important for the entire politically organised society). The best example of such a limitation was the free-will acceptance and as well common and spontaneous obedience by the British during the Second World War to the limitations of their “civic rights”. The civic self-limitation cannot of course permanently deprive the citizens of their rights. It is a “temporary” and rather exceptional means of preventing us from losing values that are particularly valuable. Its usage makes a citizen (citizens) a partner to all others who are in a civic (political) community. The litigations rigour, set off by, as Leszek Kołakowski rightly described it: “a never-ending spiral of greed” – in societies of “consumption duty” (Kołakowski, 2014, p. 212–213), is not favourable to the development of partnership relations in political life, meaning it is also not favourable to democratic processes. It could too easily legitimize the authoritarian-reforming inclinations of the institutions of political power, depriving *demos* of this dose of macro-solidarity, common solidarity, without which no democracy can succeed.

If thanks to these reflections we have slightly increased our knowledge about which kind of *demos* is most pro-democratic, it still remains open as to what kind of knowledge can modern political science offer in regards to such issues as, for example, the ability of a given society for self-limitation or how in this society the adequate awareness and attitudes could be shaped? Are we not, paradoxically, in a situation of propagating democracy and postulating research on democracy, but without chances for improving the necessary knowledge about *demos*?

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